

# THE ARROWHEAD

## Family Readiness Group Newsletter

Vol. 17

"For the families of those deployed"

8 August, 2004

Dear Arrowhead Families and Friends,

We have passed the 9-month mark and are beginning to look forward to seeing you all again; however, we remain focused on establishing a safe and secure environment for the people of Ninevah Province when we leave.

July has been eventful for the Brigade in several ways. We were recently reunited with 1-14 CAV- they have completed their mission in the South, providing security to logistics convoys for the theater, and are now back here with us in our area of operations. This is the first time since April that the entire Brigade is together. I know that the soldiers of the Warhorse Squadron are glad to be back in Mosul where the temperature is at least a few degrees cooler than down South.

Back home at Fort Lewis, we welcome a new Commander to the Rear Detachment. Although he is not new to the Brigade, MAJ Mark Landes is the Brigade's new Rear-Detachment Commander and is busy at work preparing the way to receive the Brigade back to Fort Lewis.

Mid-tour leave has continued to stay on track for the last few weeks and I don't have any indication that it will change. Currently, the leave program is scheduled to run well into September. Stay in touch with the FRG and please stay patient if things suddenly change.

There have been several questions on when to stop sending mail. For now, continue to send letters and packages; we will let you know our best-guess date in a future newsletter as our redeployment timeline is locked in.

You may have heard in the news last week about enemy activity in Mosul. Your soldiers soundly defeated the enemy wherever they met, and the Iraqi security forces that your soldiers trained and equipped demonstrated that they are on-track to take over the security of Mosul when it comes time for us to leave. They are developing into a professional and competent force, and I am confident that they will soon be poised to protect the Iraqi people on their own. You should be proud of what your soldiers have accomplished; I know that I am proud of each and every one of them.

Thank you again for all your support; we look forward to another successful month here in Mosul, and another month closer to you.

ARROWHEAD!

### Hot In Here



Soldiers from the 209<sup>th</sup> MI Co show that like the popular song by rapper Nelly, "It's Getting Hot In Here!" as temperatures soar above the 100-degree mark in Mosul, Iraq.

## **1-23<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Battalion**

Tomahawk Families and Friends,

Greetings once again from Mosul. It is hotter than ever with a typical day reaching upwards of 115 degrees. Air conditioning has become a very valuable and much needed luxury. Fortunately, the power outages here are minimal so we are managing to keep cool.

We are still conducting operations throughout the TOMAHAWK Area of Operations. However, as each day passes the Iraqi National Guard and the Iraqi Police assume more responsibility for their city. Each and every day they prove that they are ready to manage and maintain security here in Mosul. It has been through the superb training of the Tomahawk NCO's and soldiers that these Iraqi Security Forces have been able to take control of their city and maintain the peace.

Just last week we conducted a major, joint operation in a village west of Mosul led by the Iraqi National Guard. The purpose was to clear any remaining Anti-Iraqi Forces in the area. The Iraqi National Guard did an outstanding job and once again proved their legitimacy in establishing and maintaining security of their country. Furthermore, as always, the Tomahawks were very successful in aiding and facilitating the Iraqi National Guard in the accomplishment of their mission.

The Tomahawks are currently making final preparations for the transfer of authority for security to the local ING battalion in September. Again this means more responsibility for the Iraqi Security Forces to play a more proactive and aggressive role in the protection of their city. They will act as the first responders to any incident that happens in the area. We will continue to maintain less of a signature in the city and only provide support for the security forces when it is absolutely necessary and requested.

With the security forces taking the lead in the city, this has meant more time for the Tomahawk soldiers to enjoy some well deserved down time here on the FOB. We have all been thoroughly enjoying the KBR chow hall and the state of the art gym. Most have been able to conduct physical training on a regular basis in the last month. Also, a new MWR center has opened which provides free internet access, a large screen TV to watch movies and to play video games, a small library, and a few pool tables.

As always, your sacrifices do not go unappreciated. Our time here grows short and we are looking forward to returning home. We continue to keep the Tomahawk family in our prayers; you have made all the difference.

With great respect,  
LTC Buck James

## **2-3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Battalion**

Dear Family, Friends, and fellow Patriots,

Late last month, the battalion was involved in its biggest joint operation against Anti-Iraqi Forces (AIF) to date. Working closely with the Iraqi National Guard (ING), the Iraqi Police Service (IPS), and other friendly forces, the Brigade moved its Strykers and Soldiers to a large town southwest of Mosul to search for, detain, and if necessary, destroy enemy personnel and equipment.

Alpha Company's mission was to conduct a cordon of the battalion's battle space. That mission involved surrounding a specified neighborhood in the city that the battalion and its ING counterparts were directed to search and clear. To cordon means that Strykers and Soldiers are placed at all primary and secondary roads or access points of a designated area. It is then the job of those Soldiers to close the access points to all incoming and outgoing vehicles and foot traffic during the operation. This is a very critical part of the mission, because the cordon prevents enemy personnel from escaping from within or reinforcing from outside the battle space.

Meanwhile, our Scout Platoon worked closely with an Engineer Platoon to search for enemy equipment that might be hidden in caches throughout the neighborhood. This mission involves the use of high-tech mine detectors and very detailed search patterns to locate weapons, mines, ammunition, and other devices used by the enemy. It is a vital part of the mission because for every cache we successfully find, that is one less that the enemy has immediate access to for any direct actions against our forces during the operation. The scouts and engineers did a great job and captured several caches consisting of rifles, RPG launchers, and various bullets and missiles.

Once the cordon was set by Alpha Company, and the Scouts and Engineers were in place, Charlie Company and their ING counterpart began searching the neighborhood for possible enemy "safe houses", strongholds, personnel, and equipment. This was no small task when you consider the fact that the neighborhood is about the size of the entire Fort Lewis airstrip filled with



houses, cars, roadways, and people. This type of operation can be very exhausting because of the time, patience, and attention to detail required to search such a sizable area in the heat of the morning and early afternoon hours.

Because the battalion staff had worked so hard to put together a well-organized plan, and because the companies did such a great job of executing their mission, the Brigade as a whole was able to successfully capture and detain 10 enemy personnel and capture multiple enemy caches of weapons and equipment. All of this success was accomplished without a single injury to any of our Soldiers. Their success is truly a testimony to how well they execute their mission. I am extremely proud of the job they did.

The battalion was able to execute this mission because Bravo Company had stepped up and assumed force security around our FOB and our Area of Operations in and around the city of Mosul. Their contribution to the operation ensured the safety and protection of both the Brigade and Corps Headquarters.

Several days later, the battalion began planning for another mission in the northeastern portion of Mosul, and this time, it was Bravo Company that was designated as the main effort. Like the first mission, Bravo Company was tasked to conduct a joint operation with ING and IP personnel to cordon, search, clear, detain, and if necessary, destroy enemy personnel and equipment. The mission turned out to be a complete success as Bravo Company sealed down the neighborhood while the ING searched the houses. Once again a significant store of weapons was found and removed. Most significant were fuses for mortars, which will help put a stop to the mortar attacks used to harass our

bases. Throughout each of these missions, the Soldiers of the Patriot Battalion executed their mission to perfection and demonstrated why this battalion is the best battalion in Iraq. I could not be more pleased with the job they have done.

Since our last newsletter, the battalion has proudly promoted a small group of its Officers and NCOs because of missions like the ones mentioned above. These Soldiers have demonstrated their



potential for increased responsibility and have earned the right to work at the next higher level. They are, 2LT Niles Motschenbacher (C Co) and 2LT Jason

Weir (HHC) who were promoted to 1LT. SGT Gary Epley (A Co) and SGT Bradley Best (HHC) who were promoted to SSG. SPC Anthony Cook, SPC Chad Greenwood, and SPC Ahmed Sheshi of HHC who were promoted to SGT.

It has always been a privilege for the leaders of this battalion to award good Soldiers for their achievements and their service. Late last month, we recognized four of our medics for their outstanding contribution and achievement while tending to wounded Soldiers in a combat environment. Their quick reaction and competence as medics undoubtedly saved the lives of the Soldiers they tended to. For their extraordinary contribution, the Army Commendation Medal was awarded to SGT Derigus Underwood, SGT Justin White, CPL Ivan Diazcastillo, and PFC Milton Sumrell.

The Civil Affairs Team continues to do its part in contributing to the overall mission of helping and supporting the Iraqi people. Recently they accompanied Charlie Company to the Muhammed Younis Al Sabawi Primary School opening. The project involved a major renovation of the school that included repainting the walls, repairing the electric system, providing new furniture, improving restrooms, and replacing broken windows and chalkboards. This project totaled \$40,000 out of the \$117,700 that was spent on schools alone in the past few weeks. The school is also located in a neighborhood where we have detained several members of a cell that was conducting attacks in Mosul. By capturing the Anti Iraqi Fighters and following up our operations with this kind of project that benefits the community, we are increasingly

denying the enemy the support they need to continue their operations.



Once the school projects are complete, there is usually a ribbon cutting ceremony where guests of honor and members of the

local community celebrate the reopening of their renovated school. It is during these ribbon-cutting ceremonies that Soldiers take the opportunity to distribute supplies that have been generously donated by families all over the United States. These events are the most productive means for our Soldiers to reach out and make a direct impact on the lives of the Iraqi people they are working so hard to protect.

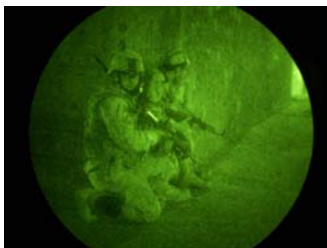
LTC Jay G. Flowers  
"PATRIOTS"

### **5-20<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion**

Dear wives and family members of the Sykes' Regulars,

The soldiers of TF Regulars' continue to perform brilliantly and we continue to take the fight to the enemy in our Area of Operation. We have been aggressively going after known enemy cells operating in our AO and have been very successful to date. Since the writing of the last FRG, the battalion that will be replacing us visited to gain intelligence about their new home they will be taking over later this year. We all were delighted to provide whatever helpful hints and lessons learned to them during their visit and they left with a better understanding of the challenges we face on a daily basis.

We recently received a welcome old friend into our area of operations. 1-14 Cavalry disengaged from



their mission in south central Iraq and was reassigned their old stomping ground. Additionally, the largest operation to date took place in Tall Afar as the Brigade conducted offensive

operations to root out terrorists. Elements of 1-23 Infantry, 2-3 Infantry, and 5-20 Infantry combined together with Iraqi National Guard elements to find, capture, or kill insurgents operating in Tall Afar. The operation was a sweeping success and proved to the enemy the level of our resolve to bring peace and stability to the area.

The recent passing of Corporal Demetrius Rice and PFC Jesse Martinez was a difficult event to experience for the Regulars and for Battle Company. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the families of these two outstanding soldiers and Americans. Your thoughts, support, and prayers for the Rice and Martinez family are deeply appreciated.

### **Battle Company**

B Co has been exceptionally busy the past two weeks with security missions and offensive operations. We have been taking time to look after ourselves and will be going to dental services so the FRG can be assured that we will be returning with flashing smiles. Congratulations to SPC Owen and SSG Russell who both reenlisted. SSG Russell will be staying with us and SPC Owen will reclassify his MOS to be a transportation expert. The soldiers have been sweating as the temperatures remain well above the 100s. We look forward to returning and seeing the US again.

This week was a difficult week for Battle Company. One of our members, SSG Gamble, was injured during a recent operation. He is doing fine and is currently hospitalized for his wounds. SSG Gamble is recovering in Mosul and will soon be moving to Landstuhl. All of us are praying for his quick recovery. We are continuing to plan for our return and now that July is behind us, we have one more grueling hot month until September and with a bit of luck, cooler temperatures will arrive. Many soldiers are choosing to stabilize with their Battle Company family and reenlist to remain at Ft. Lewis. I know that it is a great opportunity for the children to complete school and if you wanted to purchase a house you'll have the opportunity to build equity in it.

### **The Rock**

The last couple of weeks have been very good for the Rock. Men in this company have displayed, once again, undying devotion of duty and steadfast courage in the face of adversity. During recent operations, Rock Company soldiers detained over 18 suspected enemy individuals and confiscated numerous pieces of critical enemy equipment. The

high standards Rock soldiers maintain while executing every duty have been the crux of this company's success. Furthermore, many soldiers in the Rock have decided that the Army is something



they would like to pursue further. Over 18 soldiers in this company have "re-upped," or re-enlisted to extend their current contract with the US Army. It takes a

lot of character, honor, and courage to re-enlist in a combat zone. Congratulations to all the Re-enlistees, as well as their families. The Rock has also promoted over 25 soldiers recently. It is a testament to the quality of men in this company that so many of them have been selected for increased responsibility. This week ends like so many others – just the same as it began. Though sometimes routine and uninteresting, life in Iraq is okay. I want to assure you that your Rock soldier is doing well and making you proud.

### **Hound**

As the Summer days burn on, everyone here at the FOB continue with their daily missions. The temperatures are persistent as is the success of the soldiers of the Hound Family. Each section continues to work hard, sustaining life on the FOB. Additionally, missions continue to bring peace to Iraq and help the new government get on its feet. This week, the Mortar Section, "Thunder", conducted training to maintain their valuable skills. These skills are essential to the success of the Thunder Platoon, and were executed with extraordinary precision and accuracy, maintaining the Hound standard for greatness. The Staff continues to be terrific, maintaining Command and Control in our battle space. Long hours and determination are required to keep the Battalion's wheels turning, planning mission after mission with great success. The Battalion Scouts continue to make their mark in Battalion history with continual achievements mission after mission. Their professionalism and dedication to duty is apparent on all missions. Keeping the logistics going in the Battalion are our attachments. The Field Feeding Team, Logistical Support Team, and the Combat Readiness Team have all done phenomenal work. Whether it is running the chow scene, ensuring supplies are being pushed, or keeping the Battalion's fleet at a high state of readiness, these soldiers contribute greatly to the success of the Battalion. From all of us in our little peace in Iraq,

we hope that things are well back at home. We thank you for your continued support of the great soldiers of the Hound family, and for keeping the home fires burning.

### **D Troop/1-14 CAV**

It's been nearly nine months now since we have said our goodbyes to our loved ones before departing to a land where we knew we could make a difference for so many people, and we have. UAV platoon monitors and performs aerial reconnaissance daily, and are working around the clock for the security of our FOB and surrounding locations. The Multi-Sensor Platoon continues to make up the majority of the Dragoons' security forces for the base while planning on near-future sensor implant missions. New faces include; SPC Steger, SGT Droste, SPC Gerdes, SPC Hardy, and SGT Appignani. The NBC platoon still goes on convoys but not as often as when 1-14 CAV was here. Headquarters platoon continues to run the security sector while still working their individual commodity shops. HQ welcomes it's new orderly room clerk, SGT Ellis. Inventories for the change of command are complete, and we have a new commander of the Dragoons. CPT Kenneth Wilkinson assumed command of D Troop on August 3, 2004. The morale of the soldiers increases as the day of our return creeps up on us. I am sure all of us are greatly anticipating our departure from Iraq. We will leave knowing that we have improved and changed the lives of many Iraqi's and for that, we are all honored to have had the chance to do so. I, personally, would like to thank everyone of the FRG for your continuous support and care.

### **BSMC**

At our FOB one of the most significant differences in the 5-20 IN Medical Platoon and the Brigade Support Medical Company (BSMC) is that they have integrated us with X-ray capability. This additional asset is one factor that enhances medical support, resulting in Level II versus Level I, and far forward care. The BSMC has digital radiography capability that, according to SGT Ryan Jenkins, "increased the efficiency in the diagnosis of fractures and shrapnel wounds, while providing electronic transportability of the pictures." Although the BSMC is currently only slated for one X-ray NCO, SGT Jenkins has demonstrated professionalism, technical and tactical knowledge, and dedication to duty in cross-training other BSMC soldiers to operate the digital radiography equipment. The capabilities of this piece of equipment diversify care, facilitating diagnosis from

various angles often minimizing the number of soldiers who are evacuated to a higher level of care. In addition, it has, on more than one occasion, empowered the medics and providers with the essential information that may save critical casualties their life, limb, or eyesight. Another added benefit of the digital x-ray system is the elimination of the processor and liquid chemicals to develop the film. This minimizes the logistical footprint, as well as, eliminating a hazard waste stream. The Dental Section of the Brigade Support Medical Company (BSMC) has supported all organic units, attached Reserve and National Guard components, and numerous other personnel during deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The dental clinic provided many services to include oral surgery, endodontics (root canals), operative and aesthetic dentistry, annual exams and dental hygiene. Many improvements have been made in transitioning the dental component into a lighter and more mobile asset. For the majority of the deployment, the BSMC Dental Section supported 5-20 Infantry Battalion with mobile assets, minimizing travel and lost time to the soldiers and their Companies. After the Battalion's recent move the medical community demonstrated both versatility and cooperation in their effort to conserve fighting strength across the battlefield by augmenting BSMC with an additional Dentist from 380<sup>th</sup> Medical Company, based out of Balad, Iraq. The additional dentist facilitates on-site dental support for 5-20 Infantry Battalion and attachments. Currently, the Dentist has undertaken the task of annual exams and follow-up care if required. Seeing over 125 patients per week, the Dentist has provided care for HHC/5-20 IN and B/5-20 IN and plans to see every soldier in the Battalion prior to redeployment. The Dental Section's efforts serve a critical role in the prevention of dental disease within the theater of operations.

The outstanding contributions of the soldiers assigned and attached to the Regulars continue to make great contributions to success. Our soldiers are seasoned veterans, yet they remain vigilant and ready to do their jobs to bring peace and stability to the area. Another month has passed and we creep closer and closer to the time when we can reunite with our loved ones. At the end of our tour, we will all be able to hold our heads high and know that we did our part to make America safer through our efforts. The time here has been very challenging, but rewarding in the fact that we are making a difference.

LTC Karl D. Reed

## **1-14<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Squadron**

Dear Family and Friends of the WARHORSE Squadron,

We're back in our old home-FOB (we are now sharing the FOB with 5-20 IN)! Morale has been noticeably higher since we made the move. We are back in containers with air conditioners, beds, and an absence of bugs and mice. We also have the entire Squadron together for the first time since early January. We are focused on operations along the Syrian border, training the Iraqi Border Police, and deterring terrorists from trying to enter Iraq.

We've had some changes of command since our last newsletter. On 3 August, CPT Ken Wilkenson (formerly the S-2 of 1-23 IN) took command of Delta Troop from CPT Tom Bauchspies. We are glad to welcome Ken and his wife Cathy (she is also deployed to Iraq working for 13<sup>th</sup> COSCOM). Tom Bauchspies is moving up to work in the Brigade S-2 shop. We wish all the best to him, his wife, and their children. On 4 August, CPT Arieveh Austin took command of C/52 IN from CPT Eric Molfino. We welcome Arieveh and his wife to the Squadron FRG. Eric Molfino is heading up to Brigade to be the Comptroller. He and his wife will also be missed, but I encourage everyone to continue your participation in the Family Readiness Group, so that we can continue to keep you informed on what we're are doing and, ultimately, our plans for coming home. Thanks so much to our FRG leaders for all that you've done to support the Squadron.

Our mailing address has changed back to the old address for all of 1-14 CAV soldiers:

Rank Name  
Troop, 1-14 CAV  
3-2 SBCT  
APO AE 09385

As always, your cards, packages, letters, and e-mails are something that always brightens our day. Thank you also for your prayers and encouragement. We are in the last 3 months of this deployment and everyone is looking forward to the day when we can hand this mission over to 2-14 CAV and begin moving back to our loved ones.

"Warhorse"

LTC Buddy Carman

### 3-17<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Squadron

#### THE LIGHTHORSE "FLY-BY-NIGHT" SERVICE

When Task Force 3-17 Cavalry arrived in northern Iraq to replace the 101<sup>st</sup> Aviation Brigade, it inherited an extremely large sector—as well as the unenviable responsibility to maintain aviation coverage throughout the area of operations with only a fraction of the personnel and resources available to its predecessors. Undaunted by this formidable challenge, the Lighthorse troopers took it on willingly, pushing themselves to complete the mission in spite of their limited numbers.

While the Task Force has been remarkably successful in providing aviation support to the coalition forces in its sector, it has also been forced to call upon every available asset and ask every trooper to perform not only their assigned duties, but also to pitch in and assist their fellow soldiers whenever necessary. Some individuals have been cross-trained in new job skills, while others have offered their expertise in an effort to facilitate collective mission accomplishment.

One of the best examples of these selfless soldiers is CPT Boyer, the Task Force Class III/V Platoon Leader. CPT Boyer's primary responsibility is to ensure that the Task Force is properly supplied with fuel and ammunition. However, as an Army aviator, he has also pulled double duty as a UH-60 Blackhawk pilot for A Co. 2/10 Aviation, "Voodoo," the Task Force's assault company.

CPT Boyer initially enlisted in the Army as a 12B Combat Engineer, completing his Basic and Advanced Individual Training at Fort Leonard Wood, MO, before reporting to duty with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division at Fort Stewart, Georgia. After five and a half years as a Sapper, he applied for a Green-to-Gold scholarship and was accepted at Armstrong University in Savannah, GA, where he earned his degree as well as a commission as an Aviation Officer. CPT Boyer then moved on to Fort Rucker, AL, where he completed the Aviation Officer Basic Course and Flight School, earning his wings as a Blackhawk pilot in the process.

CPT Boyer's first duty assignment was with C Co., 2-10 Aviation at Fort Drum, NY. He spent eight months as the company's executive officer before becoming a flight platoon leader. He held this position for two years before being transferred to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 10<sup>th</sup> Aviation Brigade, to assume his current duties and

responsibilities as the III/V platoon leader. When the Brigade deployed to Afghanistan in June of 2003, CPT Boyer and the 31 fuel and ammunition handling specialists in his platoon stayed behind to prepare to deploy to Iraq with 3-17 CAV.

As platoon leader, CPT Boyer's primary job is to ensure quality control for the Task Force's fuel supply. To accomplish this critically important task, he circulates between 3-17's Forward Arming and Refueling Points (FARPs) and verifies that the personnel at each site are testing fuel before accepting it from their suppliers at the 44<sup>th</sup> Combat Support Battalion, storing it properly, and filtering and recirculating it to avoid any contamination or deterioration of its



quality. In addition, CPT Boyer interfaces with the 44<sup>th</sup> CSB to obtain necessary supplies and equipment.

As previously stated, CPT Boyer's contributions to the Task Force are by no means limited to fuel supply and distribution. In spite of being assigned to ground duties, he has worked hard to maintain the highest possible pilot's rating. The Aviation Branch has five separate readiness levels. Pilots arriving to their first unit are generally rated at Readiness Level Three or RL-3, indicating that they are qualified to handle most routine flight tasks under the supervision of an instructor pilot or IP. To attain RL-2 status, pilots must undergo mission training, training to perform tactical tasks such as reconnaissance and security missions—once again, under the watchful eye of an IP. Once properly trained and mission-qualified, pilots are rated RL-1, and can fly without an IP. The only remaining hurdles are to become certified for daytime, nighttime and night-vision-goggle missions; and, finally, to become a Pilot-in-Command or PC. CPT Boyer has been able to maintain his proficiency as an RL-1 Pilot in Command for the past three years.

Given A Co. 2-10 Aviation's heavy mission load, having such an experienced pilot on hand is of great value. While CPT Boyer does not fly as often as most of the Voodoo pilots, he is always on standby as a member of Voodoo's night crews, and can step in to fly a mission and replace another pilot

in order to allow A/2-10 to rotate its personnel and avoid wearing them down. Thanks to CPT Boyer's availability and dedication to keeping his skills sharp, Task Force Lighthouse has been able to shoulder the heavy burden of responsibility for aviation support in northern Iraq with complete confidence.

### WHAT'S COOKIN'?

In the immortal words of Napoleon Bonaparte, "An Army marches on its stomach." This venerable historic saying touches on a very practical reality—if you want to fight, to have to eat. By the same token, the better you eat, the better you fight.

Soldiers deployed overseas in the past few years have had the advantage of being able to depend on civilian contractors to provide them with plenty of good food—in fact, the quantity and variety of food available in dining facilities in Iraq often compares favorably to some mess halls back in the United States. As a result, the Army's Food Service Specialists have relinquished their cooking duties and, as so many other soldiers before them, have taken on new responsibilities in order to accomplish a new and different mission.

The cooks assigned to Task Force 3-17 Cavalry are no exception to this rule. While the mess section came to Iraq fully prepared to cook and serve field rations, their Mobile Kitchen Trailers and other cooking equipment and utensils have seen scant use since their arrival in country, with the exception of a brief stay in Balad, where the cooks used these facilities to serve pre-cooked rations to the Lighthouse troopers.

Since their arrival the 3-17 cooks have diversified their activities considerably, while continuing to use their essential job skills on a daily basis. The cooks perform headcount at the FOB dining facility to ensure that the food service contractors can account for all the meals they served, and build a statistical database to help them predict how much food to prepare for each meal, thus conserving



resources and maximizing efficiency. The cooks are also responsible for conducting regular sanitation inspections to ensure that the dining facility

meets the Army's standards for cleanliness and hygiene. Given the extreme weather conditions in Iraq, as well as the significant risk of infectious diseases, the mess section's efforts to maintain quality control are a key component of the coalition forces' continued health and welfare. Finally, the food service specialists have made arrangements to cater several special events throughout the Task Force's tenure here, to include the Organizational Day Barbecue and the Hail and Farewell organized for MAJ Callahan and CSM Troxell.

In addition to these duties, the cooks have taken on many other tasks. "We're a part of just about any mission the Task Force takes on, from escorting R&R convoys to pulling gate guard, tower guard or Command Post duty, as well as taking part in Downed Aircraft Recovery Team operations or supporting Civil-Military Operations missions," says SFC Bailey, NCOIC of the Task Force Mess Section. Such readiness and flexibility are hallmarks of cavalry troopers, and mark the 3-17 cooks as indispensable members of the Lighthouse team.

### 1-37 Field Artillery Battalion

Greetings to all the "On the Minute" families. It is hard to believe that August is already here. This time last year we were packing all of our personal belongings and sending them to Kuwait. Thankfully, the year is moving along and we are getting closer to the plane flight back to McChord AFB. However, we are still very aware of our surroundings here in Iraq and continue to perform our missions as though we just arrived in country.

The last few weeks have been very busy and, not surprisingly, very hot. It is difficult to walk to breakfast in the morning when it is already over 100 degrees, but we are getting used to it. The whole battalion continues to work extremely hard on a daily basis. And for this newsletter, instead of reporting the battalion's events on a general basis, we decided to report on a more personal level. We asked a soldier in each battery to write about "his day at work." We hope you enjoy the soldier's first hand accounts of a day in Iraq. Thank you again for all of your love and support and we will write again soon.

### A Day in the life of SSG Williams, A Bty, 1-37 FA 0001hrs 31 July

I am in my room winding down from a long day of convoys. Even when I have a long day I try not to come "home" and go straight to sleep. I take

my time, listen to music and stare at my family pictures night after night as if I have never seen them before.

0200hrs 31 July

Now that I have taken time for myself, I am preparing to take a shower. I grab my personal hygiene kit; shower shoes, towel and take the 15 yard walk to the shower unit.

0245hrs 31 July

I turn my lights out; say my prayers and go to sleep.

0700hrs 31 July

There is a knock at my door and it is one of my soldiers asking me if I am going to chow. I regretfully decline the invitation and lay back down for another hour.

0800hrs 31 July

I am having a meeting in my room with two NCOs in my platoon. I hand out tasks that are to be completed and I proceed to sort my laundry for turn-in.

1000hrs 31 July

I am standing in front of my door enjoying the last breeze from my air conditioner before I negotiate the already triple digit temperature on the other side. With sun block on my face and sunglasses over my eyes, I exit my room with a huge laundry bag slung over my back. My destination is the Battery Operations Center. Once at the BOC, I am collectively working on duty rosters with my peers. When the duty roster is complete and posted, I begin to manage my time.

1100hrs 31 July

I am back in my room (under the safety of my air conditioner) changing into my physical fitness uniform. My plan is to eat lunch and go to the gym because I drew the task of NCOIC of QRF (quick reactionary force). QRF is a small task force prepared to react to any situation that may or may not arise. I try to think positive, telling myself that it will be a quiet night. Then I snap back into reality, realizing that I am in Alpha Battery and we will be called no matter what.

1200hrs 31 July

I am at the chow hall, eating pizza and talking "Army".

1245hrs 31 July

I return to the BOC to complete additional tasks before my P.T. session. While at the BOC my Battery Commander walks in and makes the sarcastic comment "why didn't anyone tell me it was casual day", eluding to the fact that I was in P.T. uniform. I explained that I was the NCOIC of QRF and I was getting some personal time. Shortly after that conversation, my Battery Commander politely kicked me and two other Platoon Sergeants out of

his office, so he could talk to soldiers about reenlistment.

1330 to 1630hrs 31 July

There is nothing significant going on. I am in and out of my room procrastinating, trying to convince myself that exercise is not that important.

1700hrs 31 July

I finally reach our Battery gym and I have already been briefed that it is more than probable that I will be rolling out on a QRF mission. With excuse in hand, I complete a very short workout.

1800hrs 31 July

I return to my room, grab my things and take a quick shower.

1900hrs 31 July

I am back at the BOC, inspecting equipment and preparing the crew for our mission.

2030hrs 31 July

The QRF is staged at the BOC and prepared to roll when we get a call that our base is being hit with indirect fire and we should take cover.

2045hrs 31 July

I am rolling off the Base on a mission not to return until the following morning. We are on our way to secure a cache of various munitions that are in the process of being unearthed.

2115hrs 31 July

We reach the sight of the cache and relieve the QRF that was securing the cache while engineers dug it up. The full moon gives you a view of numerous bunkers with the small town glowing in the background.

2130hrs 31 July

We take over security and begin to strategically place our vehicles around the area to ensure 360-degree coverage of the area.

2200hrs 31 July

Our perimeter is set up and we quickly realize why digging halted at night. Vision is limited and the ground is littered with unexploded ordinance that is barely visible.

2230hrs 31 July

Alpha Steel soldiers are on alert, constantly scanning the area with night sights. Prior to our arrival, the QRF was engaged with mortar fire, from angry locals who were not happy about U.S. Forces digging up their cache.

0500hrs 01 August

Our Battery XO instructs me to rally the soldiers for movement. The sun is already starting to rise and movement will keep enemy forces from targeting our position.

0820hrs 01 August

Engineers are back on the scene to resume the important mission of digging up and destroying

munitions, that would have fell in the hands of the enemy to later be launched at U.S. Forces.

0850hrs 01 August

I am rolling back onto the Base after a night of pulling security on a small town in Iraq.

0858hrs 01 August

I reach the chow hall just in time for the soldiers to grab a meal before returning to our living containers.

0930hrs 01 August

Once in my room I begin the routine from the following morning as if it was mandatory. I am listening to music, pacing and staring at family photos.

1130hrs 01 August

With my wind down complete, I grab my things to take a shower.

1230hrs 01 August

I turn my lights out; say my prayer and go to sleep.

As you can see "A Day in the Life" of SSG Eric



Williams is not the time from midnight to midnight, it is the time in between, waking up and going to sleep. No one-day is the same but I try to make sure they all end the same.

There are easy days and difficult days but no matter what classification my day falls under it is a day closer to going home.

### **Just Another 'Thunder' Day, SFC Philip Peters, B Battery, 1-37 FA**

It's hard to describe a typical day in Iraq. On any given day, B Battery soldiers are deployed to guard a large Iraqi Ammunition Supply Point, soldiers guard the Ammunition Holding Area at our Forward Operating Base, and other soldiers scan the area around the camp nightly. We man the Battery Operations Center (BOC) and along with 1SG Davis provide all of the support services necessary to keep the battery operating. But at the heart of our daily operations is the mounted patrol, where soldiers led by a platoon leader and/or platoon sergeant load their vehicles and leave the protective berm in order to escort or make contact with the local civic and security leaders, or patrol remote areas to determine local attitudes toward U.S. soldiers and the Iraqi government. Many days the schedule is not as active as the one I am about

to describe, but some are even busier. In this particular day, there are no firefights or attacks while on our patrol.

First wake up comes at 0330, the personnel on shift in the BOC wake-up the Platoon Sergeant and soldiers assigned to the counter-IED sweep. After 30 minutes for personal hygiene, we load weapons



and ammunition on the trucks and make sure that we have food, water and night vision equipment "just in case". We depart at 0500 in our trucks to link up with the Engineers attached

to the Task Force, and then leave the FOB to search for Improvised Explosive Devices. IEDs are homemade bombs that are hidden next to heavily traveled roadways in order to target US and Iraqi security vehicles. Sometimes the bombers will coordinate their attacks with rifle or rocket fire to try and keep us from pursuing them. This morning the Engineers scan the roadways for bombs, while the Artillery soldiers provide security and backup the search visually. The route, departure time, and duration changes on a daily basis to keep the bad guys from targeting us. After the mission we return to the FOB to refuel the vehicles, eat breakfast and prepare for the next mission.

At 0945 we gather a Lieutenant (or CPT Barnett), a Platoon Sergeant, and the soldiers tasked for escort duty to be briefed on our escort mission. This time we will be escorting Civil Affairs personnel to meet with civil and security leaders in three of the outlying towns and villages. The briefing covers the route we will take, the order that the vehicles will travel in, the latest reports of enemy activity, and a review of each person's actions to take in case we are attacked while on patrol. We depart at 1000 and drive east across the Tigris River, arriving in our first town at about 1045. Most of the B Battery soldiers take up defensive positions and scan the neighborhood around the meeting place, alert for anything that seems out of place. The Civil Affairs personnel and the B Battery officer, with an armed escort, meet with the town's mayor, the Chief of Police, and local civic leaders to determine if there is any resistance to the local and national governments and to discuss issues where we can support the town through our expertise or funding. A lot of the time these issues turn out to be requests for money for a project that has been denied by the regional government. The local children view our arrival with excitement, and we

are bombarded with requests for chocolate, pens, water or MREs. While trying to remain polite and friendly to the kids, we always have to keep our guard up against anyone who might try to take advantage of a lapse in our defense. By 1130 the meeting has concluded and we mount up to go to the next town. Each vehicle commander verifies that all personnel are present and that we have all weapons and sensitive equipment. When all vehicles have reported in to the Convoy Commander, we depart for the next village, which is about 25 minutes down the road. The situation at this village is similar to the last one, except that it is more remote, and the streets are filled with potholes that can break even a humvee's suspension if the drivers aren't alert. By 1230 we are mounted back up and headed down a dirt trail to the next town. By 1400 we have completed meetings at the last town and are headed back to the FOB. As we come within radio range of the FOB we call to get an updated report on any attacks in the area and find out that a supply convoy traveling north about 50 kilometers from us was attacked by an IED. The convoy had no casualties or damage since the bomber detonated his bomb too early, but he also did not leave enough evidence for the Quick Reaction Force to make an arrest. We finally arrive back at FOB Endurance at 1500, then fuel the vehicles and return to the Battery to download ammunition and clean weapons. There is a lot of stretching, since for six hours we have been constantly scanning from side to side, straining our necks against the resistance of armored collars. Often we will compare how much water each other has drunk, since the temperatures are running 115 to 120 degrees now and there is little shade available. Add to that each soldier is wearing up to 40 pounds on their body armor and you understand why our shirts are sometimes dripping with sweat.

After dinner, soldiers report for duty at the Ammunition Holding Area, relieving those who are already there. At dusk the first shift readies equipment to man the night Observation Point; B Battery will man this post during the night. The Commander and First Sergeant review the next day's action with the officers and senior NCOs. By 2100 all soldiers have been briefed on the next day's mission and are ready to go to the showers; we don't use the hot water taps because the water tanks have been soaking up the sun all day and the "cold" water is almost too hot. While some go to bed early to be ready for the next day's counter IED sweep, others gather to watch movies, play games, or go to the gym. As we get ready for bed, we wonder if tonight we will receive a rocket attack and

mentally review the route to the nearest hardened shelter.

Although not all days are as chaotic as this one, this is a fairly typical day for B Battery soldiers. Your love and support, as well as our support of each other, is vital in helping us handle the pressures that all soldiers in this battalion face on a daily basis.

### **A Day in the Life of SPC Greg Hallman, C Battery, 1-37 FA**

Our typical day starts off with guard mount. Soldiers going on shift are inspected one by one for gear serviceability and weapons cleanliness. Our job here is basically the security of this camp, and the soldiers and civilian workers in it. We work the gates and we also have a quick reaction force that responds to all emergencies on or around our camp.

The days are all repetitious. The only things that really change are soldiers leave dates and the rumors of when we're coming home. The chow was great when we arrived in Mosul, compared to the MREs we were eating, but that got old real quick. We often find ourselves in hour-long conversations about restaurants and what we're going to eat when we get back.

It's hard to believe we used to get up in the morning shivering. Here in the summer it reaches ninety degrees by nine A.M. I can't begin to imagine how miserable it would be without air conditioners in our rooms. Picture yourself inside a dryer and you'll know how we feel.

Many soldiers have access to TV's and videogames and most of the luxuries of home, but we don't have our families. Most soldiers spend their free time on the Internet or satellite phones. That's pretty much the only morale booster out here, besides mail and our photographs. All of us have watched more movies than Siskel and Roeper, but they help to pass the time.

Everyone in Charlie Battery has exceeded

the standards.

The guys on the gates are very thorough when letting the civilians who work here on or off the camp.

Meanwhile they have to maintain



close security on the busy streets outside the gates. The QRF is on call twenty-four hours a day for seven days a week and responds to everything in

less than two minutes. The QRF has performed many difficult missions from twenty-one straight hours of security over watch to putting out a fire on camp.

All in all, this deployment has been quite an experience for everyone, both soldiers and family members. We've had plenty of time to think about our future, and maybe even correct some mistakes we've made in the past. We all daydream of that moment we get back. We wonder who to hug first, the kids or the wife. We've learned not to take so many things for granted. It's been about nine months now, don't know when we're leaving, but it's not much longer.

From all the soldiers in Charlie Battery and myself we thank you all for your support.

### **A Day in the Life of SPC Mark Tanner, HSB, 1-37 FA**

If I am on mission platoon, I know what mission I will be conducting the night before. Missions usually consist of escorting people or equipment to any of the numerous small towns and villages, which fall into our area of responsibility. In addition, about once a week we travel forty miles north to the city of Mosul to conduct administrative type of operations at the various FOBs in and around Mosul.

On any given day, I am usually on QRF (quick reaction force) or on mission platoon. A typical day for me starts at 0530 with a wake up call from my alarm clock. I stagger out of bed and get some coffee to wake myself up. By about 0615 I am fully alert and ready for the day. We have a daily formation at 0630. The 1SG puts out some valuable information, and then we are released. After formation, our PLT SGT, SSG Kouger, gives us our mission for the day.

When I am assigned to the quick reaction force, we have to be ready on a minute's notice, 24 hours, 7 days a week. The QRF job is to handle any event that comes up from recovering broken-down vehicles to securing re-supply lines to protecting critical infrastructure. This work is always varied and no two missions are exactly the same. We have a solid reputation within the battalion as the dependable 'go-to' team when people need help. The whole crew is pretty tight and we generally work very well together.

To prepare for a mission I usually do a lot of checks on the HMMWV. I usually end up as the driver or the TC of the HMMWV. About one hour before execution of a mission, I will perform before operations checks on the HMMWV that is assigned to me for the mission. I also check commo

equipment and make sure all equipment is properly loaded and secured. After the mission brief from the convoy commander we depart on the mission. Missions usually take from 6 to 15 hours, depending upon destination and objectives. It is not uncommon for me to drive my HMMWV over 120 miles on any given mission. Once the mission is complete I conduct after operations checks on my vehicle and conduct a sensitive item turn in. After the mission is finished and the officer in charge has no follow on tasks for me, I usually go back to my room take a shower and watch a movie. Depending on the time of the day, I will go to either the MWR center or the local national phone center and call my wife or check my email. The free time is limited for us because of the missions, but the free time that is available to me is spent either relaxing, watching movies with my fellow soldiers, or at the MWR centers trying to talk with family and friends. There is one dining facility that we eat at everyday. They serve four meals a day and the food isn't all that bad actually. They also have large screen TVs inside to watch while we eat.

### **A/2-131 FA (TAB)**

Greetings to everyone back home. Last week four soldiers got to go home on leave. We have been given six more leave slots for the month of August. We look forward to taking advantage of this program and to the rest it will provide us as well as the opportunity to see our loved ones.

I want to congratulate SPC Garcia who was promoted to SGT last week – a great soldier whose promotion is well-deserved.

As mentioned last newsletter, the support platoon, RDR Sects 1,2, and 3, and the BTRY HQ were awarded the 2ID combat patch by COL Rounds last week. It was an honor to be included among this distinguished unit.

Area improvement continues on the FOBs. The radar sections on the southern FOB got showers at their location last week. We are being treated well by the supply system. The soldiers will be receiving new uniforms and boots to replace worn out ones.

We send back all our love and appreciate all of your support from home.

CPT Gomez

## **296<sup>th</sup> Brigade Support Battalion**

### ***COMMANDER'S NOTE***

It's August. We're not on the home stretch yet but we're rounding the turn! Each passing day we get closer to returning to our loved ones. Last week an element from 1/25 left after conducting their initial recon and to see our friends from across the airfield in amongst our company marked a milestone in our deployment. This is a major event for the Brigade as we begin preparing for redeployment.

As we get closer to mid-August we are reaching what we hope is the end of "extremely hot" temperatures. By September we should only have "really hot" days. Then in late September we should be enjoying some temperate days before our return to the cooler climes of our beloved northwest.

Another milestone is the departure from our ranks of MAJ Christopher Kang. Doc Kang has been an invaluable leader and caregiver for the soldiers of the entire Brigade. Chris is leaving the Army and will pursue his medical career at Puyallup Hospital. MAJ Kang has supported the Battalion as the Battalion Field Surgeon in a selfless manner. The Frontline Battalion will miss MAJ Kang but welcome the new Battalion Surgeon, MAJ Walter Fink, who recently finished his residency at Madigan Army Medical Center.

We continue to receive new soldiers to the Frontline Support Battalion. All are welcome and will make our great unit even better.

To close, I tip my hat to all the families back home for their continued support to their loved ones serving their country. Due to your great support the soldiers have been able to focus on the mission at hand and support the Brigade in a fantastic manner. Your support during this deployment has been outstanding. Thank you. Frontline Support!!

### ***HHC OUTLAWS***

Greetings from Iraq. We've all heard about the heat wave that has struck western Washington. Here things are a little different. Most mornings we break 100 degrees by 10AM. We've all grown accustomed to drinking a lot of water. The heat is a constant danger, but we have modified our schedules to minimize our soldiers working in the heat. Even with the heat, the soldiers of HHC Outlaws continue to provide exceptional service to the 296th Battalion and the Arrowhead Brigade.

Support Operations carries on with their challenging mission coordinating transportation for the massive quantity of supplies that the brigade requires to function successfully. The battalion staff is keeping up their good work providing essential services to the soldiers of the 296th Battalion.

The month of July has been hot. Fortunately the days seem to go by more quickly as we approach redeployment. We have passed on many useful ideas to the reconnaissance element of 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division to help them prepare for their upcoming deployment. Our soldiers have been extremely busy protecting our bases in the guard towers, performing Mayor Cell duties which help improve the base living conditions, and preparing our equipment for turning over to 1st Brigade. It's a huge challenge, but our soldiers have been performing their duties remarkably. Our soldiers, currently cooking at four different sites, are doing an excellent job. They have received many compliments from the units they support. Providing great chow is a key element in maintaining the morale, health, and welfare of soldiers.

As we get closer to redeployment, I would like to remind everyone back home that we are not out of the woods yet. We have several months still remaining in our deployment. Many of our thoughts are about our loved ones back home, but we must remain focused on the mission at hand. We cannot rest until we are safely back home.

In this issue, we would like to recognize SPC Kehrner for his determination and enthusiasm performing his duties as a Movement Control Specialist in the Support Operations section. His loyalty and dedication are directly responsible for the successful missions conducted by 296th BSB. He ensures that all soldiers and local host nation civilians are taken care of and receive the help that they need. During his free time he seeks continual improvement, both physically and mentally. His rigorous physical training schedule is complemented by his studies for the upcoming promotion board. He is an outstanding soldier who is always dependable. He plays a pivotal role in supporting the fighting force of the Arrowhead Brigade. Good work SPC Kehrner.

### ***MAD DAWGS***

The Mad Dawg family just got bigger yesterday. We had a shipment of six soldiers come in, and every platoon received at least one new soldier. We also got in a new lieutenant, 2LT Mitch Liggins.

2LT Liggins will be in charge of the headquarters section of the Distribution Company until we get back to Fort Lewis. Once we get back home there will be a pretty big shuffle of lieutenants as some move on to different units and others move on to another phase of their life. All the soldiers can anticipate new platoon leaders during this time.

As we approach the end of our deployment the Mad Dawgs are deeply immersed in LOGPACs to Stryker units in remote locations. These missions out to FOBs have become the main focus of DC in the past few weeks. Even soldiers not going on these missions are affected as soldiers preparing to leave at 3 a.m. blast their radios in an effort to motivate themselves before they roll out.

Dodgeball is going to be the next battalion tournament established. I guess this is part of the Dodgeball resurgence seen since the release of Ben Stiller's latest movie on that very topic. From what I hear SFC Dave Smart wants to establish an All-Star team bent on taking home the top prize. I will keep you informed on how that goes.

The locals tell us that it cools off by the end of August around here. We all surely hope that is true. I did feel a nice breeze the other night and it didn't feel as if I just opened the oven door to check on a pot roast, so that's a positive sign.

### ***FMC BLACKSMITHS***

The day will soon arrive where the soldiers of the Forward Maintenance Company will be reunited with all of the families that have waited so patiently for their loved ones' arrival. Until then, the soldiers of the FMC continue to perform their duties with the same level of discipline and motivation that has been displayed since our first day in country. Our soldiers' morale is extremely high. They can finally see the light at the end of the tunnel as the deployment slowly comes to an end. R&R leaves continue to allow soldiers a small break as we approach nine months of time in Iraq. I personally would like to thank all of the family members who continue to support the soldiers of the FMC. Every soldier in the company looks forward to making and receiving phone calls, email messages and letters from home. This is a highlight of the soldiers' days. It is your support that allows the soldiers to make it through the long hot days of this tour.

The Blacksmith soldiers continue to provide outstanding maintenance support to the Arrowhead

Brigade and to Task Force Olympia from multiple locations across the northern sector of Iraq. We have been working very hard for the last month, ensuring our equipment remains combat ready. The soldiers man numerous guard towers 24 hours per day. In addition to the guard towers, Blacksmith Soldiers continue to man one of the main traffic gates to the FOB along with providing security escorts for logistical convoys throughout the brigade area of operations. Not only are the soldiers making a difference for the brigade, but they are also doing an outstanding job ensuring the safety and security of our FOB.

We are very proud of SPC Koski, who was selected as the "Blacksmith and Frontline Player of the Week" for his dedication to duty while recovering an LHS vehicle, lifting a Stryker, supporting the ICLS mechanics, and protecting this FOB as a sentry.

Once again, our thanks and appreciation goes out to the families of the Blacksmith soldiers. We would like to welcome all the new soldiers and families to the Blacksmith family. Your support truly makes a difference. God Bless.

### ***BSMC WITHDOCTORS***

The month of August started here in Mosul, Iraq with several exciting events for the 296th BSMC (aside from it being month 9 of deployment, of course!). On the first of the month, two soldiers were promoted and are now known as SGT Christensen and SPC Schwartz. SGT Christensen's determination at strengthening her promotion points paid off last week when she pinned on her stripes. SPC Schwartz's hard work during the deployment was recognized as well when the command gave him a waiver, authorizing his promotion to Specialist after just 18 months of service.

Also this month, the Witchdoctors welcomed MAJ Walter Fink, an emergency medicine doctor, and CPT Michael Garcia, an emergency medicine physician's assistant into the company, as replacements for MAJ Christopher Kang and CPT James Boone, respectively. MAJ Fink completed his residency at Madigan and is happy to be able to join his new company in Iraq because he says he favors utilizing his expertise in TO&E units, like the BSMC, rather than in TDA assignments, like a hospital. On the same note, the BSMC is sad to see MAJ Kang go, but we know that the new responsibilities and experiences that await him in the civilian sector are a significant step in his career.

progression, as he “reports for duty” to a Puyallup hospital in early September. Congratulations, Doc Kang! CPT Garcia is excited to be on another deployment and fits in well with the rest of the company, as well as bringing a large amount of experience and expertise with him. CPT Boone is doing well, recovering from the wounds he sustained in a mortar attack on FOB Freedom a few months ago and has been accepted into the emergency medicine physician’s assistant training program scheduled for this fall. The BSMC is relieved CPT Boone is recovering so well and is furthering his career development just as he had planned. If you see CPT Boone, please congratulate him as well for the company!

Finally, we celebrated SSG Cole’s birthday and though he will not disclose his actual age, he assures us that it is really OLD, and thanks us anyway for the well-wishing. We all anxiously await re-deployment to see all of our loved one’s faces again and remain home for the holidays.

### 276<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion

Well, we have finally reached the **HALF WAY** mark with our deployment. Our BN is well into the Mid-Tour Leave and R&R Pass programs with soldiers returning from Qatar telling stories of deep-sea fishing, massages, how to get extra drink tickets, shopping, and just laying by the pool. It is a short reprieve from the non-stop activity in AO North, where our soldiers are convoying, involved in firefights, reacting to car bombs, and continuing our mission to help strengthen the sovereign country of Iraq.

This past weekend soldiers convoyed north to Dohuk. It was an interesting experience for our soldiers. The people of Dohuk greeted us with waves and handshakes. The children ran up to us with smiles as we passed out candy and talked to them as we walked through the downtown market area. It was a refreshing experience to see green grass, flowers, and mountains.



### Charlie – “Cobra Company”

Entering the fifth month of activities here at the FOB. 1<sup>st</sup> platoon, as with all the other platoons, has

been consistently busy. General mission scopes range from force protection, route clearance, and construction projects. During July, 1<sup>st</sup> platoon spent the majority of its time split between force protection and building an obstacle course for Iraqi soldiers. Due to the excessive heat, soldiers have reduced their soda intake, and now drink more Gatorade and water than they probably thought was possible.



The projects and missions run seven days a week, so there is no lack of effort by the soldiers when ensuring that Cobra Company is making a name for itself.

This month we had the privilege of promoting two soldiers: PFC Jon Faulkner was promoted to specialist, and SGT David Coulby was promoted to staff sergeant.

### 18<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company

Sapper friends and families,

Greeting from Iraq. The company is doing well and missing you. We continue to keep the city of Mosul’s routes safe for travel. The Iraqi security



forces are stepping up to the plate and doing their best to shoulder the load to keep the city safe. It is heartening to see the progress that has been made by the

Iraqi’s in the short time we have been here. SGT Arnold was promoted to Sergeant and reenlisted for another 6 years. It’s a big step for him. NCOs run this company with honor and he has joined their ranks. It’s a lot of responsibility but I’m sure he’ll live up to it. SSG Renfro, SGT Malm, and SGT Francis also re-enlisted. Once again I’d like to thank the families for supporting these great soldier’s decision to stay in the Army and continue to serve this great nation. Thanks.



CPT Mitchell

### **293<sup>rd</sup> Military Police Company**

The 293<sup>rd</sup> MP Company continues to be ever vigilant in the execution of our mission. We were recently involved in a joint cordon and search



operation with 1-23 IN, 2-3 IN, 5-20 IN, and ING units. Third and fourth platoons manned three blocking positions while second platoon setup, secured, and ran the forward EPW

collection point for the operation. Each platoon performed their duties expertly and received many praises for a job well done.

Our soldiers have exhibited stellar performance both on and off duty. We've entered into the post basketball league in which we prove to be one of the top teams to beat as we hold a record of 3-1. With each passing day, the soldiers and NCOs of the company continue to show that we truly are the Best of the Best.

CPT Jason Jajack

### **209<sup>th</sup> Military Intelligence Company**

Greetings from Mosul! The Mustangs' hard work is continuing to pay off with several important successes against hostile elements. While there is no denying a continued hostile presence remains, the current successes have improved the chances of stabilizing the area of Mosul. It has become apparent that recent actions have hurt the enemy, and we are optimistic that we will continue to be able to do so. Most importantly, the successes have been achieved without any injury or losses on the part of 209<sup>th</sup>.

The weather has continued to stay above the 100-degree mark, but last week the area endured a mini-heat wave as the temperature remained above 115 for the week, with a high of 119. This week has seen a cooling trend as the temperature finally dropped below 110 degrees, but there was a trade off in the form of increased humidity. The humidity was actually responsible for the temperature drop. There is some debate within the company over whether the humidity is better than the heat, but overall everyone is happy to be seeing the lower numbers.

PFC Shelton, SPC Shelby, and SGT Williams have all taken leave in the last two weeks. We hope they and their families take the opportunity to enjoy their time off. SPC Huckaby, CW3 LeRoy, and SSG Bonogofski have all returned and transitioned back into the battle rhythm over

here. We're happy to once again have their services and contributions. Congratulations to SSG Holt for his re-enlistment. His continued service is greatly appreciated. Finally, we'd like to welcome to the company SGT Mackie and PFC Sutton. New members of the Mustang team are always welcome and we look forward to working with them.

Because of all the new faces in the MICO we recently went to the range to ensure everyone had a chance to become comfortable and proficient with their weapons. All the soldiers new to the company who had not yet had an opportunity to zero their weapons did so. Soldiers who wanted to reconfirm their zero, or just fire their weapons to maintain proficiency, also had an opportunity to do so. It was a good opportunity to get in some quality training on personal weapons as well as a chance for soldiers to participate in an activity that they enjoy and relieve some stress. Any chance to relax here is a welcome one.

In closing, these past couple of weeks have been good for the Mustangs. Although everyone misses home and is looking forward to the end of the tour, we remain focused on our mission. Our continued success, both in terms of fulfilling the mission and taking care of soldiers, means that the soldiers continue to be motivated and work hard. When we leave, we are confident that we will have left Mosul a better place because of our presence.

Very Respectfully,  
CPT Kevin G. Hosier

### **334<sup>th</sup> Signal Company**

The soldiers of 334<sup>th</sup> Signal Company have been very busy the last two weeks with a great deal of activity which has included several convoys through the city of Mosul. We welcome back Sergeants Wilson, Julaton, Blanton and Lords, as well as SPC Harder from central Iraq in support of 'Task Force Spur' which provided security escort to commercial trucks on supply routes into Baghdad.



I am happy to introduce the newest member of the Lightning family. SPC Taylor's wife gave birth to a healthy baby girl who was born on 25 July in Utah where they are staying with her parents.

Congratulations to the Taylor family!

I am proud to tell you that another great American decided to continue his service to our nation at war as SPC Rhodes has decided to re-

enlist for another 4 years. His decision to remain in the brigade means he'll continue to be a part of the Lightning Family for several years to come.



Congratulations to newly promoted SGT Torres and his family. It was a long waited promotion for SGT Torres who has continuously demonstrated a can-do and positive attitude.

We continue to set high goals and are retesting soldiers who did not achieve a 250 on their PT Test- good luck to all. Your spouses will be in good shape upon their return!

Lastly, I would like to end this edition of the letter by thanking all of our spouses, friends and family whose support and love have been phenomenal. Your love and support keep us motivated and help us to stay focused.

I wish you and your little ones a very enjoyable and SAFE summer season. Always keep sound judgment and safety in your mind in all your endeavors.

CPT Dave Kim

### And finally...



Soldiers from 276<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion conduct 50-cal machine gun training at a range in Mosul, Iraq.

Thanks to everyone once again for your continued care and support. Knowing we have the support of the folks back home makes our job that much easier. In the coming months we will face many challenges – both in Iraq and at home. Please keep us in your thoughts. You are always in ours.

- Arrowhead

\* You will notice a conspicuous non-use of spouse names in the newsletter. This is purposefully done to protect families.